

Workbook helps with market plan

The best-laid plans of even the most clever entrepreneurs often fail for lack of good marketing. Here's a book that will help guarantee that your marketing plan succeeds.

It's titled "Marketing Your Products and Services Successfully" and is written by Harriet Stephenson and Dorothy Otterson.

What makes this loose-leaf volume better than just any book are the blank spaces that you fill in as you go along. The workbook format helps you develop a customized marketing plan for your product or service.

The workbook is available for \$33.95 from Oasis Press, which produces a number of workbooks for entrepreneurs that are marketed as "The Successful Business Library." The company is at 720 S. Hillview Drive, Milpitas, Calif. 95035, (408) 263-9671.

Recently, I reviewed another Oasis volume, "Develop Your Business Plan," a good choice for



Hillel Segal

It's basically a college-level marketing course in a workbook, and it's easily tailored to your needs.

Here's how you use it:

■ First, you identify your target market. The authors help you characterize your product and seek out your most probable customers.

■ Next, you research that market and determine your market segments. The book gives you a concise but effective treatment of how to use observation, focus

someone exploring a new idea for a business. But if your product is set and now you're scouting for new customers, this marketing workbook is the volume you're looking for.

groups, interviewing and surveys to find out who will buy your product.

■ The section about how to set a price for your product is one of the best I've ever seen. It cuts to the core of one of the more complicated decisions that faces every entrepreneur, by presenting several strategies for a variety of services and goods.

■ Several chapters are devoted to creating awareness for your product and devising an advertising campaign with techniques that range from the simple to the complex. The various advertising media, from signs and billboards to television and radio, get a thorough going over, familiarizing you with a lot of important items that you don't just pick up through osmosis.

■ Customer satisfaction gets a whole chapter, too. The authors provide a short course in sales and quality control that will help you build a strong customer base.

All of this is not to say that one

book alone will finalize your marketing plan. You should show your plan to respected colleagues or advisers who can give you one-on-one feedback.

But this workbook certainly will help you get your ideas organized and help you get started.

■ The bottom line: "Marketing Your Products and Services Successfully" is better than dozens of other similar books I've seen over the years, and it comes very close to the effectiveness of a college marketing course. I wholeheartedly recommend it.

By the way, the correct number of Technophone, the lightweight cellular phone I reviewed last week, is (800) 251-1414.

Hillel Segal's column includes evaluations of gadgets, seminars and books designed to enhance business productivity. Segal is a management consultant based in Boulder.